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23 March 1952

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Office of Current Intelligence

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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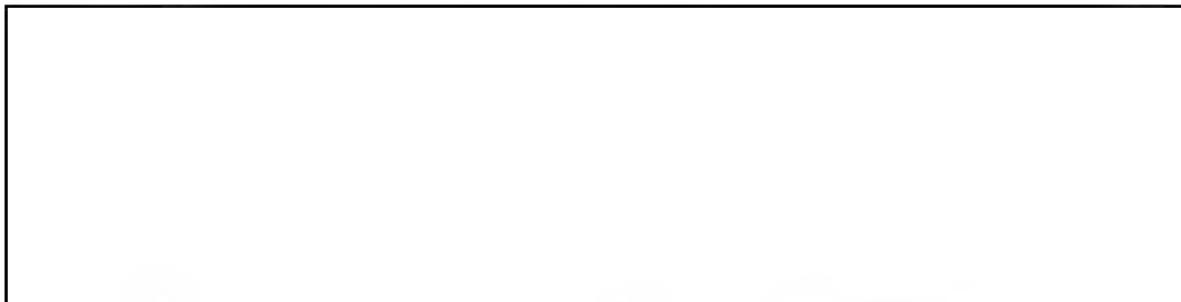
State Department review completed

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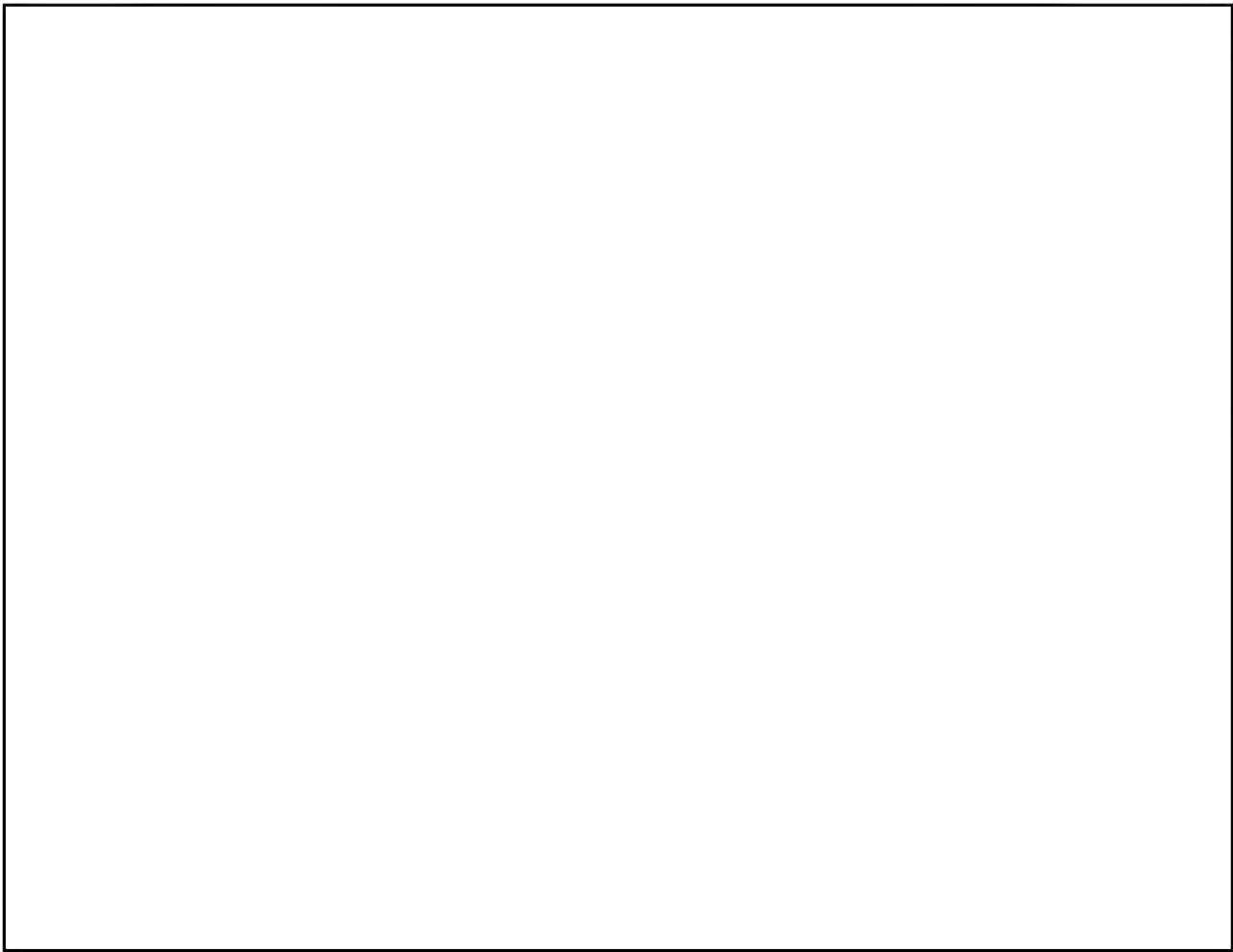
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3. Comment on the death of the Ceylonese Prime Minister:

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Prime Minister Senanayake's death removes from South Asia one of the West's staunch friends, making possible the development of the latent political trends unfavorable to American interests.

Since the present Ceylonese government was held together largely by the strong hand of the Prime Minister, his death may leave the balance of power in the hands of small splinter groups. While the Prime Minister's son, now Minister of Agriculture, is a likely successor, other able but opportunistic and unreliable leaders will try to take over and, if unsuccessful, may be expected to head strong opposition groups.

The Communists in Ceylon, although split into three parties, have an exceedingly vocal representation in Parliament, and may be expected to maneuver for more power.

NEAR EAST - AFRICA

4. Jordan-Syria rapprochement isolates Iraq:

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Top Syrian officials have concluded an extremely cordial three-day visit in Jordan. The Syrian Chief of State, Fawzi Selo, credited Jordan's King Talal with bringing about this new friendliness between their two states as well as that between Jordan and Saudi Arabia. It is generally believed that Jordan and Syria will soon establish diplomatic relations and negotiate trade agreements.

Comment: This visit highlights the realignment of the Arab states that has been taking place since the assassination of Jordan's King Abdullah on July 18, 1951.

Jordan and Iraq, once bound closely by Abdullah's dream of a Hashemite dynasty in the Near East, are now split because Abdullah's successor abandoned this ambition. Jordan's rapprochement with Syria on the north, following that with Saudi Arabia on the south, now leaves Iraq isolated.

Iraq's Prime Minister, moreover, is reported to be dissatisfied with the Arab League; this attitude will further alienate Egypt, which actively sponsors the League.

5. Political crisis in South Africa precipitated by court ruling:

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A tense atmosphere in Capetown is reported by the American Embassy, following Prime Minister Malan's indication that he will try by parliamentary means to reverse the Supreme Court's 20 March ruling that a law placing mixed-breed voters on a separate electoral role is invalid.

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Comment: Malan had earlier told a political intimate that this case, which involves the government's racial segregation program, was the most serious political issue in his country's history. Action against the court by the Nationalist government, on the other hand, would add to the fears of the large English-speaking minority that without such judicial protection its own constitutional rights might be imperiled.

The crisis arises on the eve of the nationwide demonstrations by non-Europeans scheduled for 6 April in protest against the Nationalists' segregation policies.

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